

## I.B.S.A. CONSCRIPTS IN GREAT BRITAIN

THE LONDON OFFICE WRITES: –

"Measures taken by the Government during the present year have drawn all men of Military age (18 to 41) into the Army, automatically, the only exceptions being those prescribed by the Act itself. Among these are Men of Holy Orders and regular Ministers of any Religious Denomination. As some 160 of the Elders of various Ecclesias were affected by this, we thought it wise and proper to see if they were not properly excepted from the Act, especially on account of the need of their services in the Ecclesias. A test case, on a friendly basis, was arranged with the War Office and tried at Edinburgh on Monday (17th inst.), when the Crown was represented by counsel. The decision given by the Court was entirely in our favor, the Sheriff ruling that this Association is a properly constituted Religious Institution, and that the Elders are Ministers within the meaning of the Act, and therefore properly excepted from the Act.

"We do not know, as yet, whether the War Office will require further proof before acknowledging our status, but we are corresponding with them as to this. If this matter is finally settled in our favor, we are hopeful that the Colporteurs, etc., will be granted a special concession as Lay Evangelists and Agents of the Association.

"At the present time those of our Brethren who have been conscripted can be described as follows:

Doing work of a combative character. . . . . 0  
Doing work of a non-combative character. . . . .20  
Imprisoned through failure to obey Military orders .58  
Given work of National Importance apart from

the Military, having satisfied the Tribunals of the genuineness of their conscientious objection 103

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"Quite a number have been medically rejected and a few have been given exemption on account of the important religious work they have on hand.

"At the Court in Edinburgh quite a good witness was made. Brother Shearn was chief witness and he was before the Court 1-½ hours, one-third of the time explaining wherein our teachings differ from those of the Denominations. The Court seemed really interested as well as satisfied. The hand of the Lord was manifestly with us."

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**DEATH SENTENCES COMMUTED – ALL SERENE  
BOULOGNE, FRANCE.**

Loving Christian Greeting to all the dear ones in Christ Jesus! We were "read out" on Saturday last, and the verdict you will be anxious to hear is now public: "Sentenced to suffer death by being shot, but commuted to 10 years' Penal Servitude." We are still peaceful in the knowledge of our Heavenly Father's loving care, and are not too greatly concerned, for have we not agreed to be faithful to the Lord, come what may? and we came out here in full reliance upon the Lord's grace and prepared in the strength He supplies for anything He should deem good for us.

And now for the future: I suppose we shall see the inside of a prison for a while; but as to whether we shall serve so long remains to be seen. I do not consider the sentence to be as big as it looks. They have to keep up appearances out here, you understand. I expect

we shall leave here about Tuesday or Wednesday, so do not send any particular communication after this reaches you.

We have had some nice studies; Lot as a type of Great Company, more of Psalm 89, and also Hebrews 7.

The way before us is uncertain, but we have learned so much of the Lord's care during the past few weeks that we are prepared to leave all in His hands. We have this confidence, born of our Christian experience, particularly that of recent days, that He who is for us is more than all that can be against us. There is not the least doubt in our minds that if we trust Him, we shall not be confounded, though storm and tempest may come. Oh, what a joy and peace this knowledge brings to our souls! Here is another "mystery of the Kingdom." Those with whom we have come in contact cannot understand our being so quiet and confident, when, as they say, the situation is so serious; and we do not murmur at our trials, because we count it a privilege to suffer for righteousness' sake.

Continue to pray for us that we may come out of the fire purified and made white.

Love to all the dear brethren. (Romans 15:5-7.)

ROWLAND JACKSON.

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**ARMY'S CALL TO AN EDINBURGH COLPORTEUR  
BELIEFS OF THE I.B.S.A.**

"The plea that he was a regular minister of a religious denomination, and therefore not liable for service, was advanced on behalf of a young man named James Frederick Scott, residing at 2 Leslie Place, Stockbridge, and connected with the International

Bible Students Association, who pleaded not guilty at Edinburgh Sheriff Court today before Sheriff-Substitute Orr to a charge of having failed to appear at the recruiting office when called up under the Military Service Act.

"The Honorable Secretary of the I.B.S.A., Mr. H.J. Shearn, examined by Mr. M'Laren, counsel for the defence, explained some of the work of the Association. Its meetings, he said, were open to the public, and they never took collections. To disseminate the Gospel and to establish Christians in churches for their spiritual education was the purpose of the Association's centers for Bible study. There were about 300 of these centers in Great Britain, of which there were about thirty in Scotland. They believed they were at present near the end of a Dispensation, and so were not surprised that things in the world were disturbed now. Mr. Scott was an Elder of the Edinburgh Church, or center of the Association.

"Witness, cross-examined by Mr. Wark, advocate, said there were in Great Britain about 160 Elders of military age. There was adult baptism, but not baptism of infants.

"Replying to the Sheriff, the witness said that members of the Association did not believe many things believed by other denominations. Members of the Association did not believe that the conversion of the world had commenced. Rather did they believe that God was gathering out now those who would deal with the world later on as Abraham's true sons. They did not understand that the human family was to share with God a heavenly home. They understood that man's future home was the earth, made glorious, and man restored to the perfection lost through Adam's transgression. They did not believe in the immortality of the soul, but they did believe in the resurrection of the just and unjust. They looked upon their Elders as regular ministers set apart for the spiritual instruction of members.

"When the accused entered the witness-box he told the Court that he was twenty-five years of age, and unmarried. He joined the I.B.S.A. at Dundee in 1909, and was an Elder of the Edinburgh Church, a post for which he received no payment. He made his living as a Colporteur for the Association, and his pay was the profits on the sale of literature. The duties of an Elder in the Edinburgh Church of the Association were to minister to the spiritual needs of the Church, to conduct public and private meetings, and to assist members to a proper understanding of the Word of God. They had to attend to the sacraments, baptisms, and the Lord's Supper, and visit the sick.

"He himself had taken part in a baptismal service in the Dalry Baths. He was one of the two Elders who took part, and about a dozen people were baptized. He had also taken part in communion services, but he had not officiated at a marriage or a funeral.

"Amongst other evidence put forward on behalf of the accused was that of a Patrick man, who was married by an Elder of the Association, and the latter's signature was accepted by the Registrar-General as that of a 'regular minister.'

"The Sheriff held that accused came under the exception provided by the Act, and found him not guilty of the charge."

– *Evening Dispatch.*

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